Course Syllabus

GLBL 525 001 Sp21

International Security: The Causes and Conduct of War

Michael J. Ard

Spring 2021

Mondays 6-9 pm Kraft 110 and Online via Zoom

Contact Information

Instructor: Michael J. Ard
Email: mja6@rice.edu
Office Hours: Wed 6-8 pm via Zoom. Please email to schedule. Other times available upon request.

In class and Online format. We will have recorded lectures and online presentations via Zoom. You will receive notification and the links to these via Canvas.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The problem of war remains the overarching question for the study of international relations. Our greatest theorists have pondered how war happens, how it is waged, how it ends, and how it might be prevented. New international institutions, technology, and even human attitudes have convinced some observers that interstate war might be a thing of the past, but war, arguably mankind's most enduring and destructive activity, has a strange habit of coming back.

This course examines the problem of war from the realist perspective, with a special focus on the work of Thucydides and Clausewitz. The influence of these two thinkers on international relations is incalculable; they are the twin "muses" for this class! Besides classical realism, we will also consider neorealism, democratic peace theory, and other approaches. Since every international relations student or practitioner should be at least conversant with these ideas, we try to cover as much as we can.

With some theory to guide us, our study of war will focus on the historical case study method, which will allow us to examine contemporary wars' origins, strategy, execution, and impact. We will investigate different types of war: interstate war, but also new threats such as asymmetrical wars, nuclear war, cyber wars, and even "crime wars." The focus on case studies will add greatly to your international relations literacy; these particular cases are the object lessons experts tend to draw on to make sense of our contemporary problems.

As we proceed in this course, we will also consider the many moral questions that war has always raised, and will continue to raise: Can war ever be just? When is going to war

justified? Are there things worse than war? Should we be guided by the same moral principles in war as in normal times? And many others.

The course is divided roughly into two parts: the first concerns interstate wars; the second, other types of war, or "near" war, and how they impact international security. I hope you will find our presentations on these case studies and issues unique and challenging, especially to what might be considered the conventional wisdom regarding some of them.

The main course objectives:

1) Understand theories on how wars begin and how they might have been prevented.

2) Understand new perspectives on the nature of modern war.

2) Deepen your familiarity with the key case studies of war, which are foundational for your international relations education.

4) Communicate effectively your understanding of the war case studies and the main principles discussed in the course through writing and briefing projects and classroom discussion.

Required Texts and Materials

The key to rewarding graduate classes is to read and discuss great books. At least that's how I see it. Blainey's book and Kagan's book will be our foundational readings. We have some copies available at the Rice University bookstore but use whatever your preferred source is for book buying. You can probably find good used editions of all these books at a good discount.

Geoffrey Blainey *The Causes of War* (NB: Read this before the first class on Jan. 25!)

Donald Kagan *On the Origins of War and the Preservation of Peace*

Harry Summers, Jr. *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*

Bing West *No True Glory*

F. X. Hammes *The Sling and the Stone*

Thomas Rid *Cyber War Will Not Take Place*

Various articles as assigned will be posted on the Canvas site in PDF form. Some of these will be required reading and others are either recommended or good background material. Follow the syllabus for the assignments.

Exams and Papers

40% One seminar paper (13-15 pages) examining a potential or continuing war issue. This paper will be written as a forward-leaning assessment as if the audience were senior policymakers or executives. The paper will follow a strict format, which will include an executive summary and writing in the "bottom line up front" method. The paper will include an appropriate use of graphic support (map and or tables). It must be footnoted with a bibliography. Although this is not a standard term paper, you are urged to use scholarly books and reputable journal articles for this paper. The font will be 12, and the paper will be double spaced with one-inch margins.

30% Group project presentation; six to seven teams (three students each) will present in class on a war case study. Groups will be assigned the following: The Korean War, the Yom Kippur War, the Falklands War, the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, the US intervention in Afghanistan. I assign the topics and the teams. (Part of the exercise is working on delegation and collaboration skills.) Presentations will be 25-30 minutes long and will include a PowerPoint. By the time you present, you will have a good idea on what to cover from what I've been lecturing on. You will discuss the underlying and immediate causes of the conflict, key turning points, efforts to negotiate peace, etc. Students will draw from Waltz's concept of the "three images" in international relations and will apply lessons learned from our other course readings and discussions. These presentations will include sources using standard mainstream accounts of the wars: books, journal articles, etc.

20% Three reflection essays (approx. 750 words) on the major readings, to be assigned periodically. Students will have six opportunities to complete three. These essays will be your reflection on a question that I'll give you based on the current readings. The essay will be turned in **Sunday Evening** by 9 pm in order to receive credit. Students should expect to take the lead on class discussions concerning the readings. **The first reflection essay will be on the Blainey book.** (If you elect to do it, this will be done after the first class, which is an exception from the usual pattern.)

10% Class participation with respect to the readings, exercises, etc. Make contributions to the discussing based on your reading of the course material. Questions on anything course related are welcome at any time.

Grade Policies

The seminar paper must be turned by April 30. (End of last week of classes.)

Absence Policies

Attendance is mandatory. Excuses must be approved by the instructor. We only have 13 meetings and must cover a lot.

Rice Honor Code

In accordance with stated policy. Please review university policy on plagiarism.

Disability Support Services

Please see the University website. If you have a DSA letter, please send me a copy immediately.

COVID Adaptation

This is an in the classroom face-to-face course. However, things change and sometimes, so must we. Also, I appreciate people's sensitivity to this issue and I'm careful myself (although I have a higher risk tolerance than most.) We will do online sessions as needed and I intend to have a zoom session, non-mandatory, once a week for discussion or needed catch-up. I will post my lectures in the class file after I present the class.

Course Schedule:

1) Monday, Jan 25

A) Course Introduction, learning objectives, administration, ice breaker.

B) What is war? What is peace? What do we know, or think we know, about the causes of war? Review of international relations theory, especially realism, neorealism, and Waltz's "three images."

C) Discussion of Blainey's book.

E) Reading for next class: Kagan chapter on the Peloponnesian War

F) First Reflection essay assignment: Blainey. (You will get the question at the end of this class.)

2) Monday Feb 1

A) Lecture: "Our Frenemy, the State;" R. J. Rummel on states behaving badly.

B) Thucydides' History and its enduring lessons for international relations

C) Case Study No. 1: The Origins of the Peloponnesian War

D) Assignment of teams for class "war case study" presentations.

E) Reading for next class: Kagan chapter on World War I.

Layne: ***Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace***

Russett: ***The Fact of the Democratic Peace***

F) 2nd Reflection essay assignment: Kagan on WWI (due before next class)

3) Monday Feb 8

A) Lecture: Democratic Peace Theory and the normative understanding of democracy.

B) Case Study No. 2: The Origins of World War I.

C) Reading for next class: Kagan chapter on World War II. Blainey Chapter 16 (starting page 243-264); Clausewitz Book One (On the Nature of War, p. 75- 127)

4) Monday Feb 15

A) Lecture on Clausewitz's *On War*

B) Case Study No. 3: The Origins of World War II—the European War

C) In class workshop: Presentations; meeting with your teams.

D) Reading for next class: Summers *On Strategy*

E) 3rd Reflection essay assignment: Clausewitz and Vietnam (due before next class)

5) Monday Feb 22

A) Case Study No. 4: The Vietnam War—the US experience.

B) Discussion of Summer's *On Strategy*

C) Reading for next class: West *No True Glory*

MONDAY MARCH 1– NO CLASS !

6) Monday Mar 8

A) Case Study No. 5: The Iraq War 2003-2011

B) Discussion of West's *No True Glory*

C) Reading for next class: US Counterinsurgency Manual (Chapters One and Seven); John Lewis Gaddis "The Long Peace."

7) Monday Mar 15

A) Lecture: Reflections on the Long Peace.

B) Lecture: Vietnam and Iraq reconsidered: A Critique of Counterinsurgency.

C) Class Presentations: Team 1 the Korean War.

Team 2: The Six Day War (Arab-Israeli War 1967)

D) Reading for next class: Hammes The Sling and the Stone (entire)

E) 4th Reflection assignment: On Fourth Generation War (due before next class)

8) Monday Mar 22

A) Van Creveld and Fourth Generation War. Is Clausewitz obsolete?

B) Discussion of *the Sling and the Stone*.

C) Class Presentations: Team 3: The Yom Kippur War

Team 4: The Falklands War

Team 5: The Iraq-Iran War of 1980-88

D) Reading for next class: John Mueller "The Banality of Ethnic Conflict." Kaldor "In Defense of New Wars;" Newbury and Newbury "A Catholic Mass in Kigali"

9) Monday Mar 29

A) Interethnic War and The Problem of Failed States and how this contributes to "ungoverned spaces."

B) 1993-94: The UN's Year from Hell: Somalia, Yugoslavia, and Rwanda. The Future of Humanitarian Intervention and Responsibility to Protect. How the International Community Mitigates Ethnic Conflict. Case Study Rwanda

C) Class Presentations: Team 6: Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan

Team 7: The Gulf War 1990-1991

Team 8: US Intervention in Afghanistan

D) What is a Risk Assessment? Preparation for the In Amenas case.

E) Readings for next class: In Amenas Case Study; Bracken: "How to Build a Warning System"

F) 5th Reflection assignment: In Amenas (due before next class)

10) Monday Apr 5

A) Lecture: The War on Terror – the origins of radical jihad

B) Case study: *In Amenas*

C) Discussion: In Amenas and risk assessments

D) Reading for next class: Kagan on the Cuban Missile Crisis. Blainey Chapter 17 (p. 267-290.)

11) Monday Apr 12

A) Lecture: Reflections on Nuclear War and the balance of terror

B) Case Study: The Cuban Missile Crisis.

C) Reading for next class: Thomas Rid Cyber War Will Not Take Place

D) **6TH Reflection assignment: the cyber threat (due before next class)**

12) Monday Apr 19

A) Lecture: Cyber security and cyber war: What is the current problem and the trajectory? How much of an international security threat is this?

B) Case study on Stuxnet and the Iranian nuclear program

C) Discussion of Cyber War Will Not Take Place

D) **Reading for next class: "Drug Trafficking, Violence, and Instability" by P. Williams and V. Felbab-Brown. Mexico: Organized Crime and Drug Trafficking Organizations.**

13) Monday Apr 26

A) Lecture: Quasi-wars: wars on drugs. Threats from Transnational Organizations.

B) Case study: Mexico's Transnational Criminal Organizations

C) How wars end -- looking back at our case studies

D) Review: Where have we been, where are we, and where are we heading? What can history tell us?

E) Final thoughts, questions, feedback etc.